

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
18 March 1968

MEMORANDUM

Publication of CIA Estimates
of VC/NVA Strengths

1. Pursuant to DCI instructions that the Agency position on MACV's OB holdings be made a matter of record, I suggest the following approach.

2. The preparation by OER of a seven part study presenting the CIA case in regard to accepting MACV OB figures and providing detailed statements of the OB as we see it and our rationale for the new figures. In each case, the volume will be coordinated with OCI, ONE and SAVA.

3. I have been in touch with DIA and invited them to name a senior officer who will be authorized to officially coordinate these reports for DIA. The publication will contain a statement that DIA has coordinated and agreed with the findings of the reports. This proposal has been discussed with General [redacted] who has indicated that DIA will participate.

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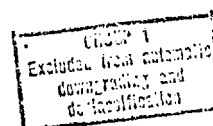
4. I propose the following seven part study:

AN ASSESSMENT OF VC/NVA MILITARY FORCE STRENGTHS

- I Military Manpower Base and its Attrition
- II VC/NVA Main and Local Forces
- III Administrative Service Forces
- IV Guerrilla Forces
- V Political Forces
- VI Self-Defense
- VII Assault Youth

5. Part One will be a recasting of the joint OCI/OER Memorandum of 1 March 68 "The Communist Ability to Recoup Their Tet Military Losses." This report would serve as a vehicle for making two major points:

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a. VC/NVA military manpower strengths are considerably greater than those estimated by MACV. The OB should be an expression of the total manpower resources actively used by the enemy in carrying out his military actions. This figure will come out to be something between 500,000 to 600,000.

b. The determination of VC/NVA manpower losses is obscured by the difficulties in allocating losses by types of military units and in isolating civilian casualties. The military casualties should be attrited against the total manpower base enrolled in VC/NVA units rather than the restricted OB maintained by MACV.

6. Since Part One will bring into the open the differences between Washington and MACV, it will serve as the opening gun. Part One will also alert the community to the fact that six additional reports will spell out the precise reasons for our differences for each major category of forces. These reports will be issued with all due speed and hopefully the entire series will have been published before the end of the month.

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